GREEN ACRES PROGRAM

New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection



PLANNING INCENTIVE LAND ACQUISITION APPLICATION

Green Acres Mission Statement

To achieve, in partnership with others, a system of interconnected open spaces whose protection will preserve and enhance New Jersey's natural environment and its historic, scenic, and recreational resources for public use and enjoyment.

GREEN ACRES PROGRAM
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NOVEMBER 2004

GREEN ACRES PROGRAM PLANNING INCENTIVE ACQUISITION APPLICATION

GENERAL INFORMATION AND GUIDELINES

The Green Acres Program assists counties and municipalities in the acquisition of open space for recreation and conservation purposes and the development of outdoor recreation facilities. Program funding comes from the Garden State Preservation Trust, supplemented by varying awards from federal programs such as the Land and Water Conservation Fund.

To reward and encourage local governments with progressive open space policies, the Green Acres established the Planning Incentive (PI) category, which provides matching grants to qualifying local governments for the acquisition of land for conservation and recreation purposes. To qualify for this funding, local governments must have a Green Acres-approved Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP), and either an open space tax *or* an alternate funding source that is stable, equivalent to an annual tax levy, and approved by Green Acres. Currently, 209 municipalities and all 21 counties in the state have passed referenda authorizing the establishment of an open space tax.

A local government can benefit in two ways from submitting a planning incentive acquisition application. First, planning incentive applicants are eligible for 50 percent matching grant funding, as compared to 25 percent grant funding through the Green Acres standard acquisition program. Second, a local government may submit one planning incentive application to acquire any eligible property identified in its OSRP. Under the standard acquisition program, a local government would have to make application for each parcel targeted for acquisition.

Green Acres accepts applications throughout the year, and normally batches all complete applications received by mid-February for consideration in our Spring funding round. Applications for the next funding round must be **postmarked by February 15, 2005**. Projects in each round compete against each other, and successful applications are approved by the Garden State Preservation Trust in April. Please be advised that the funding available from the Garden State Preservation Trust will be fully committed in the next few funding rounds, so competition for this limited funding will become increasingly intense. Please note: Submissions at the earliest possible date afford the Green Acres staff the opportunity to conduct a preliminary review of your application and to advise you of any deficiencies in the proposal.

Once a project has been approved under the PI category, Green Acres will establish an account from which the local government can obtain funding for the acquisition of lands identified in its plan. Applicants will be asked to prioritize sites and will be required to sign contracts and follow the normal Green Acres land acquisition guidelines and procedures, including obtaining appraisals, surveys, preliminary site assessments, and title insurance for each parcel. After the local government expends the grant award, Green Acres will consider supplemental funding requests based on available funding and an evaluation of the local government's progress in acquiring land. Please note that local governments may request additional funding for an existing planning incentive project by simply submitting a letter listing anticipated acquisitions and funding needs for the upcoming year.

APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY

To be eligible for funding under the Planning Incentive category, a local government must have:

\$100 of assessed value for a ten year period; and

- 1. Enacted, and be collecting and expending, an open space tax pursuant to either N.J.S.A. 40:12-16, of at least one half cent per \$100 of assessed value, or

 Adopted an alternate funding means **approved by the Green Acres Program** for land preservation that is stable and reasonably equivalent to an annual open space and recreation tax levy of at least 1 cent per
- 2. Prepared an Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP) that has been approved by the Green Acres Program.

PROJECT ELIGIBILITY

Eligible projects include, but are not limited to, the purchase of natural areas, unique land types, historic sites, conservation areas, water bodies, and areas to be used for active or passive outdoor recreation purposes. The acquisition of properties predominantly covered by building improvements (except for the acquisition of historic structures) is not eligible for assistance unless the local unit will remove the structures.

FUNDING LEVELS

The demand for local acquisition funding continues to greatly exceed Green Acres' available funding. Successful applications are normally approved subject to a cap, and often there is not sufficient funding to approve all eligible projects. For this reason, the Department of Environmental Protection offers another funding source to help local governments meet their land preservation goals. Local governments whose land acquisition needs are not fully met by the Green Acres Program have the option of either self-financing the balance or obtaining loan funding from the New Jersey Environmental Infrastructure Financing Program (EIFP). The EIFP is a low-cost (currently one-quarter market rate) loan program that is available to provide financial assistance for projects that protect or improve water quality, including most land acquisition projects. In recent years, the EIFP has become an important resource for open space preservation in New Jersey.

There are separate EIFP application and implementation processes, administered by the Department's Division of Water Quality, Municipal Finance & Construction Element. If you are interested in obtaining loan funding from the Environmental Infrastructure Financing Program, please contact the Open Space Land Acquisition Section at (609) 292-8961 to arrange a preplanning meeting. To participate in the Financing Program, specific information must be received by the Department by October 1st of each year, so you should contact one of the open space land acquisition coordinators as soon as possible to discuss your project. Interim financing is also available from the EIFP (currently at zero percent interest) for those local governments that need to act more quickly.

ELIGIBLE COSTS

Costs eligible for funding include the cost of acquiring the land as well as other costs if they are included in the initial request and there are sufficient funds. These include survey, appraisal, title, and preliminary assessment costs associated with an acquisition, provided these reports are prepared in accordance with Green Acres guidelines. The cost to demolish buildings on a site being acquired is eligible for reimbursement up to an established cap per project. Relocation costs and costs of well testing done in compliance with the Private Well Testing Act (P.L. 2001, c. 40; N.J.S.A. 58:12A-26 et seq.) also are eligible for reimbursement, if applicable. Incidental costs, individually itemized, associated with the implementation of the acquisition project, including legal, engineering, financial, geological, hydrological, inspection, and other professional services are eligible for reimbursement up to an established cap.

APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

All applicants must advertise and hold a public hearing for the purpose of discussing the proposed project *before* submitting an application for Green Acres assistance. The applicant must publish a notice of the public hearing in the official newspaper of the municipality in which the proposed project is located, and, if the local government unit is a county, also in a newspaper of general interest and circulation. The hearing must be advertised as a legal notice at least 30 days prior to the hearing, **and again** in the same newspapers as a paid advertisement (such as a display ad) at least 15 days before the hearing. The advertisements must specifically mention the proposed Green Acres application. The public hearing must be held in the evening and must be conducted by the elected governing body of the local government unit.

OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION PLAN REQUIREMENTS

Green Acres has prepared an outline entitled "Open Space and Recreation Plan Guidelines" for local units interested in participating in the PI and preparing an OSRP. Please contact Green Acres for a copy of this guidance document, or download it from the Green Acres web site at www.state.nj.us/dep/greenacres.

The organization of the Open Space and Recreation Plan, planning methods employed, and level of detail are at the discretion of the local government. Green Acres requires the following components to be contained in the OSRP:

- **1. Executive Summary:** A concise summary of a plan's origin, purpose, planning processes and findings, major goals it establishes, and actions it proposes.
- 2. Goals and Policies: The local government's goals should be clearly stated and relate to the applicant's philosophy of open space and recreation. Policies for effective action should be presented.
- **3. Inventory:** Documentation of existing public and private open space and recreation resources and opportunities. The inventory should include the size, location, ownership, and usage of each site.
- **4. Needs Analysis:** An analysis of the adequacy of the current open space and recreation system, as documented in the *Inventory*, to satisfy present and future needs.
- **5. Resource Assessment:** The assessment of lands with open space and recreation potential and interest, and the land's ability and opportunity to meet the public's needs.
- **6. Action Plan:** A program of actions to guide the orderly and coordinated execution of the plan's goals and strategies.
- 7. General Open Space System Map: A map of the open space and recreation system showing the location and general configuration of all existing public and private open space and recreation resources and sites identified as having open space and recreation potential.
- **8.** Additional Parcel Data Requirements: Data required to maintain a statewide map of existing and planned open space.
- **9. Public Support:** To ensure public support in the Open Space and Recreation Plan process, local governments need to provide opportunities for public participation. The local government can use any public participation method it chooses, but will be required to hold at least two public meetings on the OSRP. A discussion of the public participation process should be included in the OSRP
- **10. Plan Adoption**: The local unit's Planning Board must adopt the OSRP as an element of the local master plan the next time the OSRP or master plan is updated. A statement of planning board adoption is to be included in the OSRP. The local master plan is intended to be a comprehensive treatment of various issues facing the community. Open space, and the role it plays in defining the character of the community, should be an integral component of the master planning effort.

Applicants should coordinate their OSRP with other planning documents and initiatives to avoid land use conflicts with affordable housing, transportation, flood control or similar projects. Green Acres encourages applicants to use existing information, such as natural resource inventories, master plan elements, and other related information to prepare the Open Space and Recreation Plan. Green Acres will also review the conservation and recreation plan element of a municipal or county master plan to see if it satisfies the plan requirement. We recommend that applicants seek funding from the DEP's Office of Environmental Services for the preparation of an OSRP. That office provides matching grants (up to \$2,500) to local environmental commissions for a variety of projects, including the development of an open space and recreation plan.

SITE ASSESSMENT

Green Acres requires careful review of all proposed project sites for evidence of past use as landfills; hazardous waste production, storage, or disposal sites; or of the adverse effects resulting from such sites in close proximity to proposed public land. This is intended to minimize public liability for site cleanup costs and allows the state and local unit to be reasonably assured that lands acquired with public funds can be used for recreation or conservation purposes without risk to public health.

Thus, if your application is approved, you will be required to conduct a preliminary site assessment of each project site. Green Acres will provide guidance documents that require adherence to the minimum criteria established by the NJ DEP in the Technical Requirements for Site Remediation (N.J.A.C. 7:26E-3). Costs normally associated with this professional service are reimbursable as part of an approved and completed Green Acres project.

Green Acres encourages municipalities and counties to reclaim and restore former brownfields sites and transform them into public spaces, such as recreational and natural areas. The Department recently launched the "Brownfields to Greenfields" initiative and created the Office of Brownfields Reuse, where experienced NJDEP case managers can oversee remediation and revitalization efforts in your community. If you believe your project site qualifies as a brownfield, please discuss this with your Green Acres representative.

Local units proposing to acquire property for future park development should carefully analyze site suitability early in the open space/recreation planning process. Site attributes, such as wetlands, dunes, endangered species, mature forested areas, or other significant natural resources, may define, limit or, in some instances, preclude development. Applicants are urged to seek assistance from Green Acres or another source to ascertain whether special approvals and permits may be associated with sites proposed for recreational development. Early awareness of possible site development limitations is integral to sound planning practices and often minimizes subsequent construction delays and constraints.

YOUR BASIC STEWARDSHIP RESPONSIBILITIES

Prospective applicants are urged to familiarize themselves with Green Acres Program rules (found at N.J.A.C. 7:36-1.1 et seq., currently being revised) and procedures to assure mutual state/local objectives. Our policies are designed to advance Green Acres' goals of expanding New Jersey's open space resources and increasing public outdoor recreation opportunities, giving attention to natural resource preservation. Acceptance of Green Acres funds obligates the local unit to adhere to the program's requirements.

Most notably, Green Acres rules state that a local government unit that receives Green Acres funding shall not convey, dispose of, or divert to a use for other than recreation and conservation purposes any lands held by the local government unit for those purposes at the time of receipt of Green Acres funding. The local government unit is required to list such lands on the Recreation and Open Space Inventory (ROSI) required as part of an application for Green Acres funding. If the application is approved, the ROSI will become part of the project agreement between the local government unit and the State, and will be recorded by the local government unit after it receives a disbursement of Green Acres funding.

Answers to some commonly raised questions about Green Acres requirements follow:

- 1. Sites acquired or developed with assistance from (or through) Green Acres must be open to the public without discrimination or exclusion based on residency.
- 2. Scheduling the use of facilities at directly funded sites is allowable, provided that such programmed uses are not exclusive or discriminatory and that adequate provisions are made for daily or non-scheduled use.
- 3. Fees for use of directly funded sites are allowable. Differential fees for use by non-residents may also be charged but must be discussed with Green Acres to ensure equity for all New Jersey residents. All revenues derived from use or operation of directly funded sites must be employed for the operation, maintenance, or capital expenses of either that facility or the park and recreation system as a whole.

PLANNING INCENTIVE APPLICATION FORM

Complete and submit with all required attachments to: NJDEP Green Acres Program P.O. Box 412

Trenton, NJ 08625-0412 Contact:(609)984-0500

For G.A. Use Only
Date Rec'd:
Application No

County		State Legislative District Congressional District
A 1 4 6 1 1 1 4 6 4		
Applicant's federal identificat	ion numbei	r as assigned by IRS
Project Sponsor / Name of Loc	cal Unit	
Address		
City		State _NJ _ Zip
Cnief Executive Officer		
Telephone Number ()		
Total Estimated Cost of Acqui	isition Proj	ect
Land	\$	
Survey	\$	
Appraisal	\$	
Title	\$	
Prelim. site assessment		\$
Demolition (subject to cap)	\$	
Total project cost	\$	<u> </u>
Total request this roun (expected to be spent in		\$
Current Community Profile		
Area (square	e miles)	
Population	Year:	Population per square mile

	cluding the open space tax or equivalent, and any information about the trincluding specific sites, if known. (Please note that information container eleases.)
Person having day to day responsibil	ity for this application
Name	
Γitle	
Address	
City	State Zip
Telephone Number ()	extension
Fax Number ()	
E-mail address (if applicable)	
<u> </u>	(name of authorized official), hereby certify that the informa plication Form is complete and true.
provided within this Green Acres Ap	plication Form is complete and true.
	Signature of official authorized to submit application as

PLANNING INCENTIVE APPLICATION CHECKLIST

1.		Application Form: Are all questions answered? Is form signed?
2.		Governing Body Resolution (the enclosed form must be used)
3.		Recreation & Open Space Inventory (ROSI) Submissions
	=	 a. ROSI form (enclosed, with instructions) (2 copies) b. Official map of local unit, keyed to ROSI c. Current tax map(s) which show(s) each parcel of parkland listed on local unit's ROSI. The approximate boundaries of each such parcel must be clearly marked in distinctively colored ink. (If these maps were previously submitted for a Green Trust project and remain unchanged, you should contact your Green Trust representative regarding a waiver.)
4.		Proof of publication of Public Hearing advertisements and minutes of hearing (Green Acres application must be mentioned in both advertisements of special hearing)
5.		Open Space and Recreation Plan
6.		Letter from local unit's Planning Board stating that the OSRP has been, or will be (give date) adopted as part of the Master Plan
7.		Letters in support of the project from the general public, civic groups and agencies, park commissions, recreation departments, environmental commissions, user groups, or other organizations

NOTE: This checklist should be returned with your completed application. If any items are not applicable, please indicate with 'N/A' next to that item.

STATE OF NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION GREEN ACRES ENABLING RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, Green Acres Program ("State"), provides loans and/or grants to municipal and county governments and grants to nonprofit organizations for assistance in the acquisition and development of lands for outdoor recreation and conservation purposes; and

in the amount	ne(name of applicant) desires to furt of \$ from the State to fu	
	_at a cost of	(project cost);
NOW, THERI official) or the to: (a) (b) (c)	EFORE, the governing body/board resolves that	uch documents as may be required, and
	ne State shall determine if the application is complete and in es Program, and notify the applicant of the amount of the f	
	ne applicant is willing to use the State's funds in accordance s willing to enter into an agreement with the State for the al	
1. That authoriz 2. That \$ 3. That balance 4. That its perfo	the	of the above named body or board is hereby thereto with the State known as a match is required, in the amount of cost specified above, the applicant has the
true copy of a 1	resolution adopted by(name of lessel to the control of the	ent) do hereby certify that the foregoing is a gal body or board) at a meeting held on the
IN WITNESS	WHEREOF, I have hereunder set my hand and the offi	icial seal of this body this day of
	(name and title	e of Secretary or equivalent)

A Local Unit which receives a loan or grant from the State of New Jersey, Office of Green Acres shall not dispose of, or divert to a use for other than recreation and conservation purposes, any lands (1) acquired or developed with Green Acres or Federal Land and Water Conservation Fund assistance or (2) held by the Local Unit for recreation and conservation purposes at the "time of receipt of Green Acres funds" (the restricted lands) N.J.S.A. 13:8A-47. The primary purposes of this recreation and open space inventory (ROSI) are to document all restricted lands and to provide notice of the restrictions to title searchers.

Instructions

All restricted lands must be described on the completed ROSI by their block and lot identification numbers as shown on the current, official tax map <u>and</u> specify whether or not each parcel is funded or unfunded parkland. The Local Unit shall submit a tax map current as of the date of Green Acres application showing each parcel of parkland listed on the ROSI, with the approximate boundaries of each such parcel clearly marked in colored ink. Staff knowledgeable of the Local Unit's land use regulations and the uses of its land holdings must complete this ROSI. If only a portion of a current tax lot is to be restricted, the phrase *part of* or *portion of* shall be used on the ROSI. Deletion or omission of lands listed on previously submitted ROSI's is prohibited without prior written approval of the Office of Green Acres (See N.J.A.C. 7:36-20.3).

The completed ROSI must be duly executed and certified by the Local Unit's Chief Executive Officer <u>and</u> planning board chairperson (or equivalent). The page number and the total number of pages in the completed ROSI must be entered at the top right corner of each page.

All pages, including this Page 1 and the following Page 2, of the ROSI must be submitted.

SPECIAL NOTES

Lands held by school boards, parking authorities, housing authorities, and similar public agencies without primary recreation or conservation responsibilities should not be inventoried unless they are also held for recreation and conservation purposes by the Local Unit.

If lands held by the Local Unit for recreation and conservation purposes are omitted from this ROSI by mistake, inadvertence, or otherwise, such lands shall be subject to the same terms and conditions, covenants, and restrictions as they would be if they were included. This ROSI, as completed and duly executed, shall be incorporated into, and be a part of, both (1) the Green Acres Project Agreement and (2) the Declaration of Encumbrance.

Recommendations

The Local Unit's planning board, and other boards or commissions, are encouraged to participate in the preparation and review of this ROSI. When preparing the ROSI, the listed parcels of parkland should be confirmed by reference to the tax maps that are required to be submitted as part of the Green Acres application (See N.J.A.C. 7:36-6.4(a)3ii or 12.4(a)4ii).

The Local Unit's governing body and planning board should designate, with appropriate descriptive labels, all lands listed on this ROSI in any revision or update of the following master plan elements: recreation plan, conservation plan, and land use plan.

The Local Unit's governing body should officially and permanently dedicate all lands held for recreation and conservation purposes. However, failure to do so shall have no effect on the validity of the Declaration.

Rev. 1/29/99

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Definitions

For the purposes of this ROSI, the following definitions shall apply whenever the quoted words, or a form of the word are used:

"Declaration" means the recordable, written instrument executed by the Local Unit which declares that all of the Local Unit's funded and unfunded parklands are subject to Green Acres restrictions.

"Development" means any improvement or physical alteration designed to expand or enhance the use of parkland for recreation and conservation purposes.

"Funded parkland" means parkland that a Local Unit has acquired or that a Local Unit has developed with Green Acres funding.

"Held" means owned, leased, or otherwise controlled (by the Local Unit for recreation and conservation purposes).

"Lands" means real property, including improvements, rights-of-way, riparian and other rights, easements, privileges, and any other rights or interests in, relating to, or connected with real property.

"Local Unit" means a municipality or county, or other local political subdivision of this State, or any agency thereof whose primary purpose is to acquire, administer, protect, develop, and maintain lands for recreation and conservation purposes.

"Parkland" means land acquired, developed, and/or used for recreation and conservation purposes.

"Recreation and conservation purposes" means the use of lands for parks, natural areas, forests, camping, fishing, reservoirs, water reserves, wildlife preserves, hunting, boating, winter sports and similar uses for either public outdoor recreation or conservation of natural resources, or both, pursuant to the Green Acres Bond Acts. This term also includes the use of historic areas pursuant to P.L. 1974, c.102; P.L. 1978, c.118; P.L. 1983, c.354; P.L. 1987, c.265; P.L. 1989, c.183; P.L. 1992, c.88; and P.L. 1995, c.204; and the use of historic buildings and structures pursuant to P.L. 1992, c.88 and P.L. 1995, c.204; and the use of ecological and biological study areas pursuant to P.L. 1989, c.183; P.L. 1992, c.88; and P.L. 1995, c. 204.

"ROSI" mean the listing of all parcels of land held by a Local Unit for recreation and conservation purposes at the time of receipt of Green Acres funds, including a description sufficient to identify each such parcel.

"Time of receipt of Green Acres funds" means at all times beginning on the date of the letter from the Department under N.J.A.C. 7:36-6.7 or 12.5 notifying the Local Unit of the amount of the Green Acres funding award and ending on the date of receipt of the first transmittal of Green Acres funds.

"Unfunded parkland" means parkland, other than funded parkland, that is held by the Local Unit for recreation and conservation purposes at the time of receipt of Green Acres funds.

Legislative References

<u>N.J.S.A.</u> 13:8A-1 <u>et seq.</u>; <u>N.J.S.A.</u> 13:8A-19 <u>et seq.</u>; <u>N.J.S.A.</u> 8:A-35 <u>et seq.</u> (as amended and supplemented); <u>N.J.A.C.</u> 7:36-1<u>et seq.</u>; 16 <u>U.S.C.</u> 460 s. 1 <u>et seq.</u>

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(* Numerical Key)									
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Wholly Undeveloped Lands Held for Recreation and Conservation Purposes (* Alphabetical Key)

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